Our mission

"To strengthen the ability and performance of local government to better serve their community."
About Us

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body representing the interests of Queensland’s 77 local governments.

We are dedicated to promoting the importance of councils as the level of government closest to the people. Our mission is to strengthen the ability and performance of local government to better serve their community.

As a membership based organisation, our Annual Report is an important way for us to communicate to member councils our activities and operational performance during the 2016-17 financial year.

This report also serves as an introduction to the work of the LGAQ with state and federal governments to drive reforms that improve the well-being of all Queensland’s communities.

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Local government in Queensland is always evolving but there is no doubt that the pace has picked up in recent years. There were big opportunities for local councils in 2016-17 as well as some testing times. For the LGAQ, the highlight of the year was the tally of $1 billion worth of benefits won for our 77 member councils, including $400 million in the State Budget alone.

It was a year in which the LGAQ’s mantra of Achieve. Connect. Innovate. came into its own. That formula helped us record some significant wins, including the valuable Works for Queensland program, which has allowed many councils to complete or bring forward community infrastructure programs as well as maintain local jobs and create new ones.

There were also victories on issues that have long been a thorn in the side of local councils. The State Government finally agreed to the indexation of the maximum infrastructure charge and the Federal Government, after a long lobbying battle on our part, saw sense in ensuring that day labour and plant and equipment were covered under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

Our corporate objectives focus sharply on how we can enhance our leadership reputation for integrity as well as grow the scope and depth of our relationships with our members. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in our proposals to encourage openness and transparency in local government, particularly when it comes to election spending and campaign donations. These are reforms we will continue to pursue on behalf of our members.

One of the most satisfying reforms was one that did not attract many headlines but does right an historical wrong: the restoration of proper State Government Financial Assistance Grants funding to indigenous councils.

It was also fitting that local councils that worked hard to get their communities back on their feet after being hit by Tropical Cyclone Debbie in March 2017 were recognised as Queensland Greats by the State Government, as was the LGAQ itself for its role in advising, supporting and representing councils since 1896.

Greg Hallam PSM
LGAQ Chief Executive Officer
“For the LGAQ, the highlight of the year was the tally of $1 billion worth of benefits won for our members this year.”
“I believe that at the heart of that connectivity is innovation, creativity, building better linkages and exploring new technologies.”
The LGAQ is an organisation with a long and proud history of more than a century of representation - and I have been humbled by the opportunity to contribute to its future. Since my appointment in October last year, I have viewed my position as one where listening is paramount.

I believe that at the heart of that connectivity is innovation, creativity, building better linkages and exploring new technologies. Taking a creative approach to how we conduct our business will be at the forefront of how we all succeed in serving our communities interests into the future.

Central to this and to my role is ensuring that the LGAQ is meaningfully connected to its members. This year, I was fortunate to meet with member councils across the state. From Birdsville to the Cape, you simply can’t beat those face to face conversations.

This ethos also extends to our Policy Executive. In February, Policy Executive members travelled to Winton where we mapped out the first draft of our Local Government Advocacy Action Plan. It was a deliberate choice of venue - the achievements of Mayor Butch Lenton on display in Winton Shire speak to the value and power of true leadership in action. What emerged was a key theme; the LGAQ is - and always will be - an organisation that is about people and stands up for communities.

Reflecting on the past year, I am proud to say the LGAQ have kept this premise burning strong in its operations, advocacy and strategic planning; continuing the legacy of assisting councils identify and secure the best possible opportunities for their communities.

Mark Jamieson
LGAQ President
LGAQ: A 121 year old Queensland Great

Testament to the strength of local community-based leadership and in recognition of the Association’s 121-year legacy in Queensland, the LGAQ was honoured as a Queensland Great as part of the 2017 Queensland Day Awards.

The 2017 Institution Award was presented to the LGAQ for its outstanding and longstanding service to the local government sector and communities of Queensland.

One of only 13 institutions to ever receive this award over the last 17 years, the accolade acknowledged the LGAQ’s industry leadership in advocacy and support to Queensland communities.

LGAQ President Mark Jamieson accepted the award on behalf of all 77 councils in Queensland.

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said the awards and recognition given to both councils and the LGAQ acknowledged a cohesive and proactive attitude to disaster recovery.

“It is fitting that LGAQ is being recognised for its tireless contribution to our state, including coordinating and supporting local councils following our recent natural disaster,” Premier Palaszczuk said.

The evening was made even more special as the Premier used the opportunity to recognise the contribution of the many Queensland councils involved in the response and recovery efforts of Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

“LGAQ’s level of influence and achievements in local government policy have delivered benefits to every council and every ratepayer in Queensland.”

Margaret de Wit, former LGAQ President

“What makes Queensland great, is its people. You can throw just about anything at us and we’ll see you on the other side. We get back up, we face the challenge and we stand proud together. It’s all of these factors, for me, that show local government is where it is at. We’re the grassroots in helping our communities.”

Anne Baker, Mayor Isaac Regional Council

“The spirit and resilience of those communities in times of adversity is one of Queensland’s lasting strengths and it guides and inspires the way the LGAQ goes about its work.”

Mark Jamieson, LGAQ President and Mayor Sunshine Coast Council

What makes us great

“LGAQ is about the people. It’s 100% Queensland owned, working for local communities through their representative councils to ensure they are equipped with the support and tools to help them make their communities the best they can be.”

Belinda Murphy, Mayor McKinlay Shire

“This relationship and the flow-on of well thought-out policies that target local government wants and needs continues to strengthen our communities. Well done to CEO Greg and your great team.”

Rob Chandler, Mayor Barcaldine Shire Council

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Mark Jamieson, LGAQ President and Mayor Sunshine Coast Council
The LGAQ and member councils were recognised for their contribution to Queensland with a ‘Queensland Great’ award.

One of only 13 institutions to receive this award over the last 17 years, the Award acknowledged the LGAQ’s work at the forefront of disaster recovery resulting from Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

LGAQ President Mark Jamieson accepted the Award on behalf of all 77 councils in Queensland.
2017 Local Government Milestones

**1 Jul 2016**
Federal Election Submission
$150 million in indexation returned for local governments. 36 meetings with Federal decision makers.

**Jul 2016**
#AusVotes Campaign
22K reached on Twitter.

**Aug 2016**
Future Cities Summit
Councils leading the charge in innovation and smart infrastructure.

**23 Sep 2016**
Councillor Complaints Submission
LGAQ argues for fairer councillor complaints process.

**13 Jun 2017**
NWQ Innovation Roadshow
Mayors gather in Sydney for second of three innovation roadshows.

**26 Aug 2016**
New Planning Legislation
Signed Partnership Agreement with State to assist councils valued at $11.6 million.

**21 Mar 2017**
NDRRA Plant & Equipment
$7.5 million in Commonwealth funds repaid.

**28 Apr 2017**
Trade and Investment MOU
LGAQ and State sign statement of intent to boost trade in QLD.

**9 May 2017**
Disaster Management Alliance
LGAQ signs agreement with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

**18 Apr 2017**
Indigenous Housing Campaign
NPARIH Funding Campaign.

**12 May 2017**
State Budget Submission
Additional $400m, including $200 m W4Q, SGFA indexation restored.
The LGAQ: Behind the scenes

The LGAQ values its people, taking immense pride in the commitment and passion of its employees in delivering daily for our Queensland local government members.

Member expectations are understandably high, travel requirements can be gruelling and policy and service delivery challenging to navigate - so it’s vital the LGAQ invest heavily in staff wellbeing programs and support.

This year, the LGAQ was internationally recognised for its efforts to create a healthy workplace culture, and was awarded runner up in the 2017 Global Healthy Workplace Awards for Small to Medium Enterprises.

The Awards are designed to give recognition to organisations implementing programs that excel in the creation of healthy workplaces, with an emphasis on both universal relevance and adaptability to local conditions.

Equal opportunity employer  Work life balance  Healthy workplace policy
Value for money

LGAQ membership continues to be formula driven, a model which takes into consideration the relative size of councils in comparison to others. It’s a model which ensures costs are shared fairly.

This year, LGAQ subscriptions as a percentage of our total expenditure as an Association continues to tell a story of financial strength – and members are reaping the benefits.

![Graph showing LGAQ Subs as % Exp]

Sector by the numbers

- **77 councils**
- **579 councillors**
- **245 occupations**
- **39,697 employees**
- **$108 billion in assets**
- **153,000 + km of local roads**
- **$12 billion annual expenditure**
A defining year for Queensland local government

With Sarah Buckler
– LGAQ General Manager, Advocate

As the level of government closest to the community, councils are strong local employers and drivers of regional economies.

The statistics speak for themselves. However, for this network of strength to be the most successful it must be well supported by the policy frameworks and funding streams of other levels of government. The LGAQ is therefore ever vigilant in advocating for the potential of the sector as being best placed to deliver on the needs of Queensland communities.

The Works for Queensland program, conceived in partnership between the State and local government this year confirmed this capacity, delivering $400 million of infrastructure investment and creating thousands of jobs.

It was, in many ways, a flagship piece of policy which signalled the beginning of a new era in collaborative partnerships across tiers of government.

Everywhere you look this year, we’ve welcomed significant breakthroughs in policy which recognise the key role of local government in shaping and driving the futures of Queensland communities.

The restoration of State Government Funding Aid (SGFA) grants to the 2012 levels plus indexation in the 2017 State Budget was an outcome which LGAQ and indigenous Queensland councils had been working towards for 4 years. The funding will enable these councils to not just fund essential services but create an economy for their community and address inherent market failures in these remote discrete communities. Significant breakthroughs in disaster management funding, transparency and accountability and environmental impact policy have also been added to our report card over the past 12 months.

The LGAQ’s 77 members shared in $1 billion worth of benefits won this year, but more importantly they meant they could achieve more for their communities.

Developments across major policy portfolios for councils and the LGAQ have run in parallel with the continued transformative impact of technology and innovation on the sector.

This year, emerging trends like cloud services, data analytics, vehicle tracking, virtual reality and the Internet of Things (IoT) had heavy influence over the work of the LGAQ and councils.

In a busy and defining year for Queensland councils, the LGAQ has stood on the frontline for local government, helping them achieve more for the communities they serve now but importantly helping them create a legacy for future generations and prosperity.

After all, the LGAQ is not just another lobby group. The LGAQ represents another level of government, it is not simply another stakeholder, and we take this responsibility very seriously.

It’s our job as a membership based organisation to continue to remind state and federal governments that it is not in our interest to put forward views that are not grounded in community interest – or that aren’t underpinned by good public policy frameworks.

If we continue to do this, with an ear to our members and their communities, and an eye on the horizon ahead, we will all be best positioned to continue adding to this record of mutual achievement.
Achieve

Funding reform and financial sustainability

Raising just three per cent of the national taxation share, councils work hard to make the dollars go further, but continue to be constrained to undertake confidently longer term fiscal management given the ad hoc funding programs and cycles.

This year, the LGAQ fought harder than ever for councils not just to secure more sustainable funding to help improve the lives of the communities they represent but also to reform the funding system and create a more sustainable model.

Significant wins included the $400 million Works for Queensland program which has had a cathartic impact on Councils budgets and their ability to create local jobs and deliver local priorities. It also included restoration by the Federal Government of the indexation payments to Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), a loss of almost $150m over 3 years to Queensland councils, with the hardest impact felt by regional and rural councils. Adding to this was the success in bringing forward changes to infrastructure charges indexation in the new Planning Act 2016 thereby providing councils with access to an estimated $26 million per year in additional charges to fund essential community infrastructure. LGAQ advocacy for financial support for councils to implement new planning legislation also paid off with the announcement of a $4.5 million Innovation and Improvement Fund.

The LGAQ also lobbied hard for an improved cost recovery mechanism for local governments managing stock routes through the Stock Route Network Management Bill 2016. Though still to be considered by the Parliament, the underlying model seeks to provide greater control for councils in setting fees and access to 100 percent of revenues generated.

Open, accountable and transparent government

Every council in Queensland has an interest in ensuring the sector has the highest standards of integrity and accountability. In 2016-17, further steps were made with the welcoming of a series of legislative reforms requiring the real-time, online disclosure of electoral donations during council elections.

Local governments also welcomed the Palaszczuk Government’s announcement of plans to overhaul the system managing complaints against sitting councillors and the LGAQ requested review into the local government elections.

The elevated level of smear campaigns undertaken by candidates also prompted the LGAQ to investigate a Local Government Election Monitor to provide independent assessment of allegations made during campaigns.

The LGAQ has also supported a range of processes to make decision making more open and transparent while improving process efficiency and economy.

Industrial audit carves new pathway for councils

LGAQ collaborated with over 50 councils to audit their industrial practices this year in the wake of the finalisation of award modernisation by the QIRC.

The audits identified a range of strategies to assist councils to move forward in what was a transition period for many.
Partnership spotlight

• **Trade & Investment:** The Queensland Government’s new trade and investment strategy included a MOU with the LGAQ. The LGAQ continues to seek investment to support the MOU and turn this into practical support for councils - like professional development.

• **Pests & Weeds:** Local government will have greater input into how Land Protection funds are spent thanks to a new governance model designed by local government representatives in partnership with the LGAQ and Biosecurity Queensland.

• **Planning:** We signed a funded Partnership Agreement with the State focused on assisting councils transition smoothly and thrive under new planning legislation.

• **Development assessment:** In partnership with Council of Mayors (SEQ) the LGAQ developed a new digital reporting tool.

• **Heavy vehicles:** Partnership with National Heavy Vehicle Register to provide standard approach across 150,000 kms of council roads.

(RIGHT) LGAQ President Mayor Mark Jamieson presents Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Mark Furner with the LGAQ Advocacy Action Plan
Disaster management and community recovery

Two years of advocacy by the LGAQ and councils paid dividends in March when the Federal Government announced it would reimburse councils opting to use their own plant and equipment to clean up after natural disaster events where value for money can be demonstrated.

Queensland was again the victim of natural disasters during 2016-17 and again the LGAQ coordinated and supported local councils as they prepared for, were impacted by, and are now recovering from Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Independent research has shown that the use of day labour and council-owned plant and equipment has saved taxpayers $245 million between 2010 – 2015.

The breakthrough announcement addressed a funding shortfall of $7.5 million across 35 Queensland councils for disaster events dating back to 2013. Following sustained representations, the LGAQ also welcomed the Commonwealth’s decision to allow councils to use their labour for reconstruction works on council-owned essential assets where this provides better value than contract labour.

• LGAQ Staff provided around the clock support to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee, QDMC, and its operations at Kedron
• LGAQ supported councils in the impact zone with extra hands on deck, staffing the phones as concerned residents called into councils.
• LGAQ pledged $25,000 to support Queensland communities recovering from the disaster.
• LGAQ has advocated to Federal and State Government to support funding flows to help communities get back on their feet in impacted areas, particularly those seeking Category D assistance

Looking forward, the LGAQ continues to lobby for an improved upfront betterment model and mitigation to help councils better prepare and respond during time of disaster. A LGAQ Disaster Management Conference in Mackay during May 2017 brought together key stakeholders for a two day debrief on learnings and outcomes and continue the conversation towards a more resilient future.

A Disaster Management Alliance Agreement with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) was signed during the event reinforcing importance of council partnership and leadership from Local Disaster Management Groups.
The State’s indigenous local government leaders continued their strong partnership and advocacy under the auspice of the Indigenous Leaders Forum (ILF), which met twice during 2016-17.

A record number of indigenous delegates attended the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly in Canberra in June to take their unique community challenges and place them on a national agenda. Deputations with key federal government representatives were a critical part of their campaign to achieve a replacement social housing program, enhanced digital infrastructure and improved health outcomes.

A big win for indigenous councils came in the form of the restoration of State Government Funding Aid. Arrangement (SGFA) grants to their 2012 levels in
Yarrabah Shire Council Mayor Ross Andrews said the project, which includes an upgrade to a range of infrastructure has been critical for both employment and community morale.

“It really raised their self-esteem, injected a lot of pride back into the community and was encouraging given the challenges around the labour market.” - Mayor Andrews

Works for Queensland Yarrabah beautification project

$2.8 million in Works for Queensland program funding was used to support 37 new jobs in the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.

Building capacity in indigenous communities has also seen significant outcomes which maximise local employment and completion. The training is delivered on-country and tailored to the needs of councils and participants. The $3 million program is in its second year, and in 2016-17 saw 966 people from discrete indigenous communities participated in the LGAQ administered Vocational Education Training program and achieving an unprecedented 99% completion rate.

The scope of the training supports all council functions and ensure local council workers are compliant with legislation, licenses and tickets and hold the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the roles satisfactorily.

Achieve

the 2017 State Budget including indexation. It was an outcome the LGAQ had been working towards for over 4 years which when combined with the $120 million allocated for water and sewerage infrastructure and Works for Queensland funding has significantly enhanced the capacity of discrete indigenous councils to deliver essential projects to improve the lives of their community.

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The scope of the training supports all council functions and ensure local council workers are compliant with legislation, licenses and tickets and hold the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the roles satisfactorily.
Council decisions reflect how people want their communities to develop and provide opportunities for the future. In all corners of Queensland, we fought for local government’s voice in major policy issues with implications for grassroots communities.

Water and wastewater management, planning, environmental impacts and regulations, waste and climate change are among the diverse priorities of local government when building strong, sustainable Queensland communities.

The expiry of local government waste management and utility charges provisions in 2018 has seen the LGAQ strongly advocate to ensure the local community, public health and amenity is protected. LGAQ has argued these provisions be retained to ensure that there is equity in the delivery of all services and that community interests are at the centre the decision-making process.

The LGAQ and councils have also safeguarded local government interests ahead of the introduction of a container refund scheme in mid-2018, while also securing a ban on single use plastic bags.

Council partnerships like the Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP) are about thinking smarter and working together on shared sector priorities. In 2016-17, QWRAP generated close to $3 million in savings for the state and the 33 participating councils. The LGAQ also spoke out on behalf of councils on the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan resulting from the Australian Government’s water buyback program and the social and economic impacts faced by Basin communities. The LGAQ will always fight to ensure local governments are at the centre of decisions impacting their community and the environment that supports them.

Similarly, the LGAQ advocated for strong and sustainable resource communities in the form of improved social impact assessments. The Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017 has delivered 100% prohibition on FIFO working arrangements, a prohibition on discriminating against local nearby communities and a statutory requirement that a project proponent consults with local government on its Social Impact Assessment.

Creating climate resilient councils, while providing stewardship for the natural environment and the economy it supports has been a key area of success in 2016-17.

This year, the LGAQ secured $1.46 million over three years for councils and industry to improve urban water quality outcomes as part of the Reef 2050 Plan implementation. The LGAQ also hosted a Reef Councils Roundtable in Cairns to continue to highlight the level of local government investment and interest in managing and protecting this valuable environmental and economic asset.

Almost half of the 41 eligible councils have been awarded grant support for coastal hazard adaptation planning via the $12million QCoast 2100 Program during 2016-17. The LGAQ is providing a lead role in the co-ordination and delivery of the funding program that offers unprecedented financial support from either State or Federal Government for local government hazard adaptation planning.

The Queensland Climate Resilient Councils or Q CRC, a three-year $1.05 million program working with Queensland local governments to strengthen internal council decision-making processes to better respond to climate change kicked off.
With close to 40,000 employees across 245 occupations in the local government sector in Queensland, the future of work continues to be a key issue for councils.

The LGAQ formed a Future of Work Advisory group in recognition of the significant impact digital technology will have on the workforce going forward, penning a discussion paper identifying current workforce trends.

The LGAQ also delivered State-administered funding incentives worth $3.75 million as part of the First Start traineeship program, placing an additional 300 employees across 62 councils.

Focusing on people today and tomorrow
Connectivity strengthens sector

Glen Beckett – LGAQ
General Manager, Assist

Across the board, new connections are helping strengthen local government.

The Association continually strives to ensure members have access to the tools, advice, resources and insights that meaningfully assist them in their core business.

This year, we laid the groundwork for two major initiatives with the potential to reshape the sector.

LG Sherlock is big-data initiative providing new local insights helping councils to reduce risk, improve performance and identify savings.

New and improved iterations of LGOnline & Council Business Centre (CBC) stand poised to deliver innovative tools and online services benefiting both councils and the community.

We facilitated the bringing together of over 500 elected members and senior officers for the regionally based Elected Member Update (EMU) program, collecting valuable input and intel from members to shape our agenda.

The latest Better Councils, Better Communities television commercials and social media campaigns better connected councils with their communities. An independent post-campaign survey told us that community perceptions of local governments’ performance had improved.

The positive promotion of local government remained a key focus for the Association, with significant work this year to strengthen the professional networks of council media and communications officers across the state.

Our 5th Finance Summit in Cairns and Disaster Management Conference in Mackay also served to connect those in local government – with both events influenced by Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

TC Debbie also saw the Association provide 12 days of 24hr support and representation for councils – just one example of direct assistance and support in a year that was all about delivering new connections, new opportunities and looking to new horizons.
Better councils make better communities

The Better Councils Better Communities Campaign was a council-driven project to positively connect Queenslanders with their council.

12 weeks of televised commercials on all major metropolitan and regional channels accompanied a suite of social media-ready vignettes made available to all councils.

- The campaign reached one in two Queensland residents.
- 51% of residents said they felt more positive towards local council after seeing the advertisements.
- Consistent with results from 2015, 89% of residents agreed that local councils provide amenities and events that improve lifestyle.
- 73% of respondents said they trust their local council to have the best interests of the community at heart.
We started development on a bespoke local government prosecutions database. Stay tuned.

120 delegates gathered in Mackay for our Disaster Management Conference.

Almost 500 elected members and officers attended 31 workshops stretching from Thursday Island to Mt Isa to the Gold Coast.

Managing legislation got simpler. We upgraded our Legislative Compliance Service to make it easier to use.

Asset management was front and centre at our 2017 Finance Summit held in Cairns. 101 of you attended.

Did you see? The LGAQ ran 12 weeks of televised commercials on all major metropolitan and regional channels as well as a big social media campaign promoting the role of councils in communities.

We ran an Australia-first local government mentoring program pairing veteran former mayors with new and returning mayors.
Cassowary coasts into digital transformation

Cassowary Coast Regional Council’s website had a high-level of traffic – an average of 535 visits per day and 16,021 visits per month and site usage was increasing steadily.

To make the site more user friendly as well as develop more online services and transactions, council embarked on a digital transformation project with the LGAQ.

A static website was transformed into a device agnostic platform which reduced support costs and was more accessible to the community and site visitors.

Did you know?

LGAQ’s Digital Services manages 107 local government websites on behalf of 42 councils to an audience of 657,279 Queenslanders.

It also administers the LGAQ’s 15 member supporting sites plus an additional 5 sites for other business entities.

Around the state in 80 days

Our annual ‘EMU – elected member update – workshops provide an important opportunity for elected members and senior staff to come together for a professional development day unlike any on the calendar.

Almost 500 elected members and officers attended 31 workshops stretching from Thursday Island to Mt Isa to the Gold Coast. Attendees said...

“Stimulating”. “Encourages you to think differently”. “Great opportunity to hear and learn from others”. “Very informative and positive”. “Relaxed, entertaining, thought provoking”
Brent Reeman – Managing Director and CEO Peak Services

To me, innovation in Queensland local government is about solving old problems with new technology or new ways of doing things.

Innovation will be one of the key, sometimes the only, lever that local government can pull to improve efficiency, provide better services and reduce the gap between rising costs and constrained revenues.

This year we’ve seen some truly stellar examples of councils using innovation to improve how they operate. Winton Shire Council is using drones to capture footage of capital works projects, then using that footage on social media to promote the region.

Council driven geothermal projects are a notable example of how the community can benefit from council initiatives. These projects will give communities reliable energy, so no more brown-outs, and the ability to attract more industry to the region with the supply guarantee.

In the same vein, Mackay Regional Council’s smart water meters have not only saved the council money but the community has a better service as well.

The LGAQ subsidiaries – now together as Peak Services – are continuing to help councils join the dots by looking for new ways to help councils operate the best way they can.

The LGAQ subsidiaries are very proud of.

We are training more council staff through our e-learning platform, meaning participants don’t have the expense and travel commitments they would with face-to-face training.

One guarantee for Queensland local government in the age of digital disruption is that things will be different.

Every other sector in the world is being disrupted and all levels of government will be faced with the same challenge to respond.

For the LGAQ and its subsidiaries, this year has proved that change is the only way forward – we look forward to continuing our journey with Queensland local government in the years ahead.
Plugging the NBN gap in rural telecommunications

In a telecommunication win for rural Queensland, the town of Yaraka in Longreach Shire now has access to fast and reliable internet thanks to the installation of a mobile phone tower on nearby Mt Slowcombe.

Online win for Aurukun

Waking up at 4am to do on-line banking or upload Facebook photos will be history for people at the Aurukun Shire Council thanks to a long-awaited upgrade to its telecommunications capability.

An Education Queensland contract with Telstra has resulted in the installation of an optic fibre link from Weipa, a 4GX mobile phone base station and an exchange upgrade to deliver cloud-based government services.

Innovate

Local government in Queensland stands at the forefront of driving the benefits of technological change.

The LGAQ contributed to collective lobbying efforts and business cases in support of the Barcoo, Diamantina and Burke fibre optic installation – a project 16 years in the making.

This year we launched a fresh style of innovation roadshow – taking members to innovation headquarters like Apple, Microsoft and NBN to demystify emerging products and technology.

Innovative approaches to business were also on the agenda at the LGAQ’s inaugural Future Cities Summit held on 18th and 19th August 2016. The Summit brought together international, Australian, State and local government leaders with the champions of private sector innovation. Pokemon’s legacy for city planners, a generation’s desire for high-density housing and the need for cross-government collaboration in maximising infrastructure projects featured in the robust discussion held over two days.

Councils innovate and activate

Local government in Queensland stands at the forefront of driving the benefits of technological change.

The LGAQ’s Industry Development Fund helped provide exchange-based ADSL infrastructure, allowing the community to access broadband internet.

The town of 117 people had been identified as a mobile black spot and relied on an exhausted interim satellite service.

The infrastructure upgrade was the result of a productive collaboration between local and federal government and industry. The LGAQ committed $50,000 from our Industry Development Fund with Telstra and the State and Federal Government contributing the rest.
Under our umbrella

The end of the year saw the LGAQ’s five consulting entities – Propel, Total Solutions, LGIS, Local Buy and Resolute – come together under one consolidated business and brand, Peak Services.

The new company will continue to focus on providing innovative enterprise solutions in the local government sector and beyond.

Propel
2016-17 was Propel’s most profitable year to date.

The business established itself in North Queensland via the Northern Australia Services Partnership with Mackay Regional Council. This partnership has delivered a substantial step-change in operational performance for Mackay’s residents.

The Out of Hours Service has grown and now supports 20 councils with out-of-hours requirements and disaster management contingency planning, including playing a strong role supporting councils through Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

Total Solutions
Total Solutions successfully assisted councils with more than 80 grant applications through the Department of State Development’s Building Our Regions program.
Innovate

More than 3300 council staff were trained across a wide range of technical and leadership areas.

As part of the IR Helpdesk service, the Workforce team assisted 25 councils in enterprise bargaining processes following the commencement of the new Industrial Relations Act in March.

Local Government Infrastructure Services (LGIS)
LGIS continued to advance in geothermal power projects across Queensland, including the near-complete Winton plant, and detailed studies for Longreach, Quilpie and Thargomindah.

LGIS secured a flagship project management assignment with the Waltzing Matilda Centre reconstruction in Winton, as well as project management works following Tropical Cyclone Debbie.

The Business Solutions unit explored the expansion of drone capabilities in disaster management with a major trial conducted for the use of drones beyond visual line of sight.

Local Buy
This year Local Buy breached $500m in total value going through the organisation’s contracts. Local Buy made a record profit in 2016/17, with increased work in state government and the university and not-for-profit sectors.

The year saw the introduction of a Vendor Neutral Management System for temporary labour hire, with a consolidated account from multiple vendors and inbuilt analytical tools.

Resolute
Resolute continued to play a critical role in supporting many remote and bush councils, providing key IT services in locations which would otherwise struggle to receive technical services.

Resolute helped position Cassowary Coast Regional Council to take advantage of workforce mobility and future smart city initiatives through a strategic ICT review.

The company successfully provisioned its first carriage services capability supporting a disaster recovery platform for Fraser Coast. Resolute gained GITC accreditation, and won their first state government contract.
“The ongoing strength of LGM's financial position enabled a surplus distribution of $3 million in 2016/17 to continuing members.”
Local Government Mutual Services

LGM Liability
The ongoing strength of LGM’s financial position enabled a surplus distribution of $3 million in 2016/17 to continuing members. LGM Liability membership contributions for 2016/17 recognised overall claims improvement, anticipated future investment returns, and a cap to protect individual members against significant fluctuations.

LGM Assets
Following Tropical Cyclone Debbie in March 2017, LGM Assets has been working with each of the affected councils to rebuild and repair damaged assets, as well as providing support to get councils back to business as usual.

Consistent with its long-term goals of stability, sustainability and continuous risk improvement, 2016/17 also saw the continuation of the LGM Assets risk management survey program with 13 members visited by risk engineers to assist them to continue to better manage and improve the resilience of their assets.

Local Government Workcare
2016/17 provided another strong year for the LGW self-insurance scheme. The overall position once again enabled the LGW Management Committee and the LGAQ to return surplus funds to members. An investment dividend of more than $680,000 will be returned to members in 2017.

Local Government Health Plan
A joint initiative of the LGAQ and Choosewell, Local Government Health Plan is supported by the health insurance fund HCF. The Plan reduces health insurance costs by establishing an excess refund pool that refunds the policy excess payable to plan members if they need to go to hospital.

During 2016/17 over $22,750 in excess reimbursements were paid to Council employees.